

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 DHA-02
AID-05 IGA-02 MCT-01 EB-08 TRSE-00 OMB-01 IO-13
/082 W

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O 061604Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2825

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA PRIORITY

S E C R E T MANAGUA 1600

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SHUM; EAID, MASS, NU

SUBJECT: SOMOZA'S RESPONSE TO DEPARTMENT STATEMENT ON NICARAGUAN
HUMAN RIGHTS CONDUCT BEFORE FOREIGN OPERATING SUBCOMMITTEE
OF HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE, APRIL 5, 1977

REF: STATE 074993

1. SUMMARY: DURING MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR ON APRIL 5 PRESIDENT SOMOZA REJECTED DEPARTMENT'S STATEMENT ON NICARAGUAN HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION BEFORE FOREIGN OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE OF HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE. HE SAID THAT THE STATEMENT WAS BASED ON UNFOUNDED POLITICALLY MOTIVATED ALLEGATIONS AND RUMORS. PUBLIC U.S. CRITICISM CONSTITUTED UNACCEPTABLE INTERVENTION IN NICARAGUA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS WHICH LEFT HIM NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO RESPOND PUBLICLY. HUMAN RIGHTS CARROT AND STICK POLICY WOULD NOT WORK SINCE NICARAGUA WAS NOT DEPENDENT ON U.S. ASSISTANCE. POLICY WAS DESIGNED TO ALIENATE AMERICA'S FRIENDS, AND PLAYED INTO HANDS OF U.S. ENEMIES. END SUMMARY.

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2. PRESIDENT SOMOZA AGREED TO MEET WITH AMBASSADOR AT 12:00 NOON LOCAL TIME APRIL 5. AS INSTRUCTED IN REFTTEL, SOMOZA WAS SHWN A COPY OF DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY BRAY'S STATEMENT ON NICARAGUA BEFORE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FOREIGN OPERATIONS OF HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE SCHEDULED TO BE RELEASED LATER THAT SAME DAY. SOMOZA WAS TOLD THAT WHILE THIS WAS A CANDID STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION CONCERN

OVER HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION, IT WAS OUR HOPE THAT IT WOULD NOT INTERFERE WITH OUR ABILITY TO MAINTAIN A CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE ON THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

3. THE PRESIDENT ASSERTED THAT THE BRAY STATEMENT WAS COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE AND CONSTITUTED OPEN INTERVENTION IN NICARAGUA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS. HE REJECTED PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF THIS KIND BECAUSE HE WAS LEFT WITH NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO REACT OPENLY AND IN KIND. FURTHERMORE, HE SAID THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION DOES NOT KNOW WHAT THE TRUE SITUATION IS IN NICARAGUA, AND IS BASING ITS HARSH JUDGMENTS ON ALLEGATIONS, RUMORS AND HEARSAY FROM POLITICALLY MOTIVATED SOURCES, WHICH INCLUDED CERTAIN SECTORS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

4. SOMOZA SAID THAT THE QUOTE CARROT AND STICK UNQUOTE POLICY OUTLINED IN THE DEPARTMENT'S STATEMENT WOULD NOT WORK IN NICARAGUA SINCE HIS GOVERNMENT DID NOT DEPEND ON U.S. ASSISTANCE. HE WARNED THAT THE RESULT OF SUCH A POLICY WILL BE TO ALIENATE AMERICA'S FRIENDS, AS CAN BE OBSERVED IN THE CASE OF THE FIVE LATIN COUNTRIES THAT HAVE REJECTED U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE WITH HUMAN RIGHTS STRINGS ATTACHED. IT WAS A MISTAKEN POLICY THAT WEAKENED FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS AND PLAYED INTO HANDS OF SUCH ENEMIES OF THE UNITED STATES AS USSR AND CUBA.

5. HE TOOK PARTICULARLY STRONG OBJECTION TO THE LANGUAGE IN THE STATEMENT THAT REFERRED TO THE OCCASIONAL BRUTAL AND HARSH TACTICS USED BY THE NATIONAL GUARD IN MAINTAINING INTERNAL ORDER. IT WAS, HE SAID, A GROSS INSULT TO THE FIVE HUNDRED NICARAGUAN OFFICERS MOST OF WHOM WERE TRAINED IN THE UNITED STATES.

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6. THE PRESIDENT READ AMBASSADOR EXCERPTS FROM WIRE SERVICE STORY THAT QUOTED EXTENSIVELY FROM A STATEMENT ALLEGEDLY MADE BY DEPARTMENT HUMAN RIGHTS COORDINATOR PATRICIA DERIAN BEFORE A COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE MORNING OF APRIL 5. DERIAN WAS PURPORTED TO HAVE DECLARED THAT CUTTING U.S. AID AND PUBLIC DENUNCIATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS CONDUCT ARE NEGATIVE APPROACHES. SOMOZA SAID THAT HE WAS VERY MUCH CONFUSED AS TO WHAT PRECISELY CONSTITUTED U.S. POLICY ON HUMAN RIGHTS.

7. EMBASSY APPRECIATES DEPARTMENT'S EFFORT TO TAKE OUR VIEWS INTO ACCOUNT IN DRAFTING OF CONGRESSIONAL STATEMENT, AND UNDERSTANDS NEED TO MAINTAIN CREDIBILITY WITH HOSTILE COMMITTEE. NEVERTHELESS, PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF MAJOR U.S. POLICY INITIATIVE RE MILITARY ASSISTANCE AT CONGRESSIONAL HEARING WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH EMBASSY HAS TAKEN US BY SURPRISE.

8. COMMENT: SOMOZA'S INITIAL RESPONSE PROBABLY WILL FOLLOW LINES OF A PUBLIC DENUNCIATION OF U.S. INTERVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE, AND INTENSIFICATION OF GON ARMS PROCUREMENT AND COMMERCIAL PURCHASES FROM THIRD PARTIES, CONTINUATION OF STATUS QUO ON HUMAN RIGHTS BUT

NO RENUNCIATION OF BILATERAL MILITARY AGREEMENT WITH UNITED STATES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HUMAN RIGHTS, US CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MANAGU01600
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770120-0296
Format: TEL
From: MANAGUA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770482/aaaactwg.tel
Line Count: 118
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 74993
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2883278
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOMOZA'S RESPONSE TO DEPARTMENT STATEMENT ON NICARAGUAN HUMAN RIGHTS CONDUCT BEFORE FOREIGN OPERATING SUBCOMMITTEE OF HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE , APRIL 5, 1977
TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, EAID, MASS, NU, (SOMOZA DEBAYLE, ANASTASIO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/391e54a9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009